[58] Dihemodiednige (bl), say the Nambikwara men: "it is a good
582 thing to marry!" But it is not easy. The ideal marriage is the one which gives a "young and pretty woman" (monodjinigere, bl) whose virginity one will have (to break the hymen: tajordtige, bl). But such women are precisely the ones who are claimed by the chiefs or shamans, and only a few young men will have a chance to obtain such wives. The others are condemned to a long period of celibacy
[838] which they will break by having sexual relations with their brothers-in-law, or else they will marry an "old woman" who cannot have sexual relations (tinoanebidere, bl), one who is widowed or repudiated, whom no one wants. Such marriages are not rare among the Nambikwara, and are explained by the fundamental economic role of the couple which we have already commented on. But they are not permanent. When the young man feels his position in the group
582 strengthened, or when a better occasion is presented he abandons
584 (amnjdtige, bl) his old wife to take another (ulamtunjdtige, bl) who
587 is younger and more seductive. It happens that a man thus marries three or four wives successively before considering himself satisfied.(1)

[71] 1. Here also, the documents of the 18th century relating to the Tupi support the comparison: "..... at times they take some old woman from whom they do not expect children, because there are no others, only so that they will cook the food, since they have no mother or sisters-in-law to take care of them, thus they are cared for, and are contented at present time with some old woman by whom they are always well treated and then taking other women by whom they have children later, either leaving the first wife or keeping her, if she wishes, for the reason mentioned above." (Anchieta, loc.cit., p. 260-261).

The repudiated woman [111] goes to live with her parents if they are still living, joins up with another man if she has the opportunity or even remains her former husband's fire, whose existence she shares and whose tasks she participates in, but in a slightly inferior position. Such is the position of b3 in the household of her ex-husband B1. Another method of obtaining the young woman desired consists of
● §56 seducing her, even if she is married. Adultery and more generally sentimental intrigues are very frequent among the Nambikwara.

836 who seem to be susceptible to violent passions. We knew an Indian who fled with a Paresi Indian girl during our stay, and lived with her for several months hidden in the bush and fleeing the husband who was in hot pursuit after them. Here is the way an informant (B15) tells of a former adventure. He reconstructs a dialogue with the beloved woman:

51. ajodarinjẽ — otendnjẽ — ajdotẽha ẽjdakanjajni ẽtnadajẽ ajhajtasi'ndige tamimednjẽ (b1)
Do you want to make love?--I do not wish to. --You are worth nothing! I want to make love or I will kill you! Let us go make love.

Very anxiously the woman responds:

higekanhẽ ẽairirẽ ẽalrideduẽ etẽdahẽ dung-rajeni (b1)
Do it quickly, my husband will be angry, he will beat me.

684 686 There is no social sanction against adultery; but the wronged husband can avenge himself in a fearful manner and in circumstances of this type poison, used either against the wife or against the lover, plays its role. In order to avoid such incidents, the companions intervene between the adversaries and counsel the seducer to disappear for a while:

52. ijebetnjẽ ajẽnakatedajẽni ekudde ekudde ekudde ekudde ekudde ekudde ekudde ekudde kajẽdodni ujẽnarenjani (b1)
Go away. --I am going far away. --When this moon is ended and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, then, in that one, you may return.

We knew an Indian (C11) whose wife disappeared one day, having left with a member of his group. He thought first of revenge, but his companions intervened, and it was finally decided that the lover should keep the wife and would give him a dog as compensation. Several months later, the lover died (we were not able to find out whether the death was normal or accidental), and the woman returned to her husband, who said he was very happy to have acquired the dog also. This story should not be interpreted in the sense of an equivalence, conceived by the Indian spirit, between a woman and a dog. We have insisted too much on the fundamental role of the woman in Nambikwara life to have to return to that here. But in groups where trade [112] exists in such a primitive form (1) exchanges of goods have as a

1. Cf. p. 93 f.